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CDC Recommends Temporary Suspension of Adoptions from Chinese Orphanage in Response to Measles Outbreak

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today recommended a temporary suspension of adoption proceedings for children from the Zhuzhou Child Welfare Institute in the Hunan Province of China, which is experiencing an outbreak of measles.

On April 6, 2004, public health officials in Seattle and King County, Washington, reported a laboratory-confirmed case of measles in a recently adopted child from China. An investigation identified measles-like rash illness in 9 of 12 children adopted by 11 families who traveled to China in March. Six of the 9 have laboratory-confirmed measles (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm53d409a1.htm>).

CDC is working with public health partners in China to implement control measures and prevent further spread of measles. The temporary suspension of adoption proceedings at the affected orphanage is recommended while control measures are implemented.

"Adopting children is such a wonderful experience for so many people," said CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "To make this experience as safe and healthy as possible for everyone, we ask prospective parents traveling internationally to adopt children to ensure that their and their family members' immunizations are current."

Recommendations for vaccination are:

- Children should receive two doses of measles vaccine at 12-15 months of age and at 4-6 years of age. (The second dose may be received at any age, as long as it is at least 28 days after the first dose).
- Adults born after 1956, who are at least 18 years of age, should receive at least one dose of vaccine unless they have had measles or been previously vaccinated.

The incubation period for measles ranges from 7-21 days. Adoptees and their families who returned from China more than 21 days ago and have not had contact with recent cases should not be at risk for measles.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that resides in mucus in the nose and throat of infected people. Droplets containing the virus are spread through the air by sneezing and coughing. The virus can remain active and contagious on infected surfaces for up to two hours.

CDC recommended a similar suspension in 2001 when an outbreak among children adopted internationally resulted in 14 U.S. measles cases, 10 among adopted children and four among caregivers and siblings.

For more information, the public should contact the CDC Public Inquiry hotline at 800-311-3435 or 404-639-3534.

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and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions
by providing credible information on critical health issues;
and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local,
national and international organizations.*

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